# Certified Local Governments

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

State, Tribal, Local, Plans & Grants



Clock tower in Spokane, Washington.

## What is a Certified Local Government?

**Across the nation, thousands of diverse communities have taken action to preserve their unique historic character. The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is the official preservation partnership connecting local, state, and Federal governments to help communities save their irreplaceable historic resources. Through the certification process, communities make a local commitment to historic preservation. This commitment is key to America's ability to preserve, protect, and increase awareness of our unique cultural heritage across the country.**

This national initiative provides valuable technical assistance and funding to local governments seeking to preserve what is special about their community. Annually the U.S. Congress appropriates funds from the Historic Preservation Fund to support preservation at the State, Tribal, and Local level. The National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) administer funds in each state and distribute those allocated to CLGs.

The CLG Program has helped to build preservation support at the local level where hands-on protection of local resources occurs. Because local planning office staff often play key roles in CLG projects, the thread of historic preservation becomes woven into the fabric of local land-use policy. Strong preservation partnerships have been forged among the local, state, and national networks.

Today, CLG grants from the Historic Preservation Fund support a wide range of projects, including building rehabilitation and feasibility studies, design guidelines and conservation district ordinances, and many kinds of public preservation education.



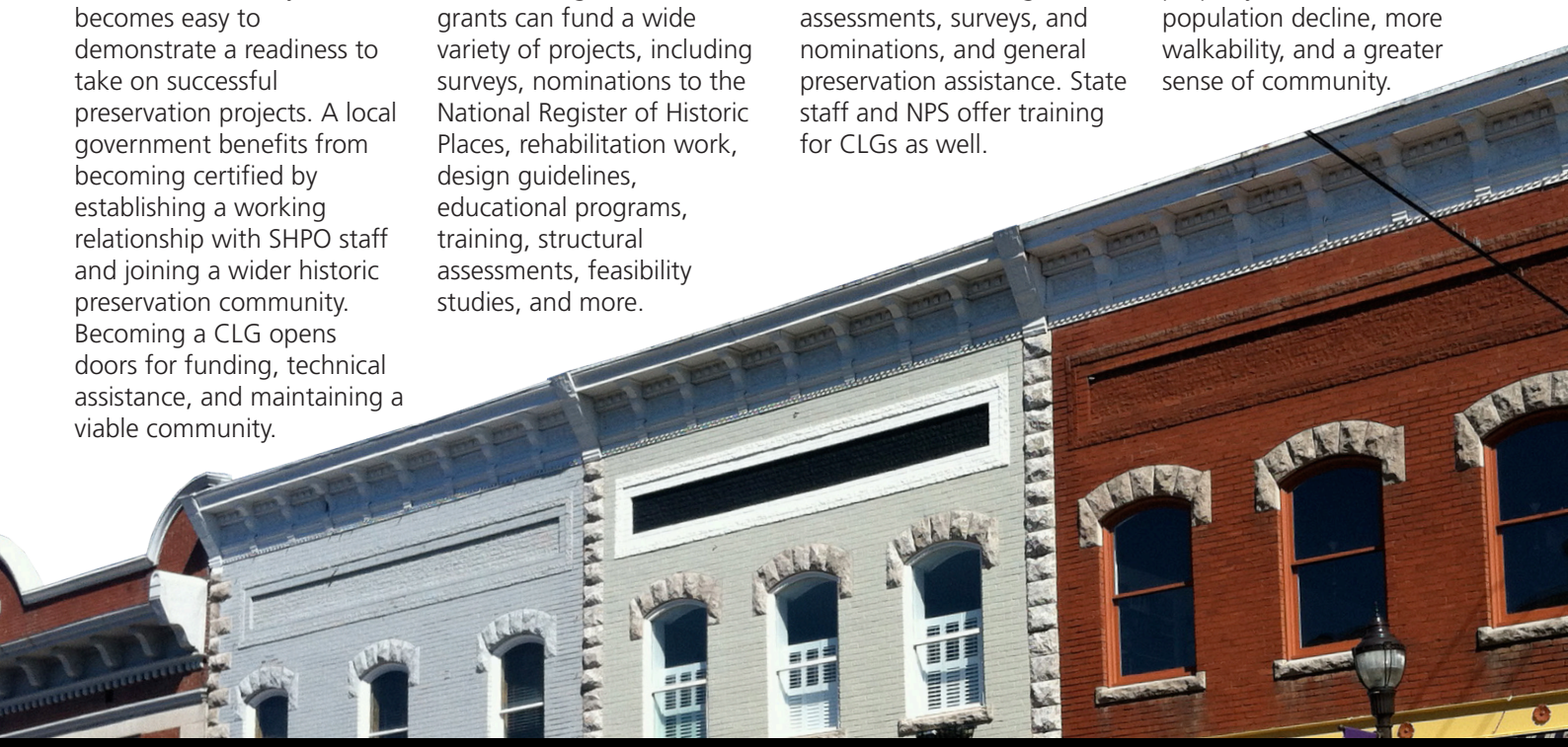
CLG funded Window rehabilitation training in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Being a CLG demonstrates a community's commitment to saving what is important from the past for future generations. As a certified community, it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on successful preservation projects. A local government benefits from becoming certified by establishing a working relationship with SHPO staff and joining a wider historic preservation community. Becoming a CLG opens doors for funding, technical assistance, and maintaining a viable community.

**Funding**
States receive annual appropriations from the Historic Preservation Fund and are required to give at least 10% of their funding to CLGs as subgrants. These grants can fund a wide variety of projects, including surveys, nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, feasibility studies, and more.

**Technical Assistance**
As a CLG, a community has direct access to SHPO staff through a designated CLG coordinator. CLGs receive assistance with their commission, building assessments, surveys, and nominations, and general preservation assistance. State staff and NPS offer training for CLGs as well.

**Viable Community**
Historic preservation has proven economic, environmental, and social benefits. Studies show that historic districts have higher property values, less population decline, more walkability, and a greater sense of community.



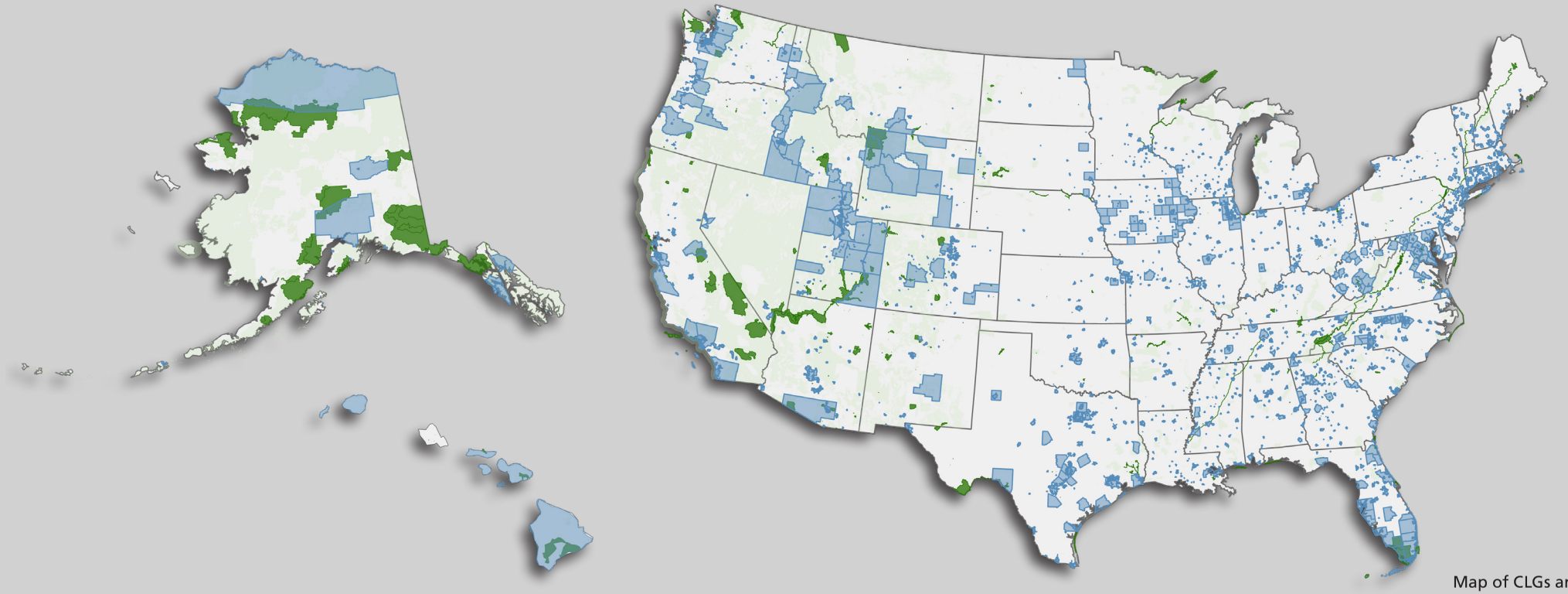
Rogers, Arkansas.

# Where are CLGs?

There are thousands of CLGs across the country. They come in all shapes and sizes, exist in all fifty states, and many of them are gateways to National Park sites. A gateway community is any municipality that is located within 60 miles of a National Park site. Partnerships between gateway CLGs and National Parks affords mutual opportunities for community planning and development according to local historic preservation needs.

Certified Local Governments

National Park sites



Map of CLGs and NPS sites in 2024.

# CLGs and Preservation

The CLG Program has been supporting local preservation efforts since its inception in 1980. The program is supported by the Historic Preservation Fund, which was established to help fund preservation grant programs created by the National Historic Preservation Act.

CLGs must meet the following requirements:

1. Have an active preservation commission
2. Maintain an inventory of historic resources
3. Follow state and local laws
4. Serve as the public face for preservation in their community

**1900**

**1906**
Antiquities Act is passed by Congress. It is the first national preservation law.

**1916**
The National Park Service is established.

**1920**

**1931**
Charleston, South Carolina is the first locally protected historic district.

**1935**
Historic Sites Act is passed by Congress to preserve historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance.

**1940**

**1949**
National Trust for Historic Preservation is chartered by Congress.

**1960**

**1966**
National Historic Preservation Act is enacted. It is the foundation of federal preservation efforts.

**1976**
Historic Preservation Fund is authorized by Congress.

**1980**

**1980**
National Main Street Center is established.

**1980**
Certified Local Government Program is established.

**1983**
The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions is established.

**1985**
The first CLGs are certified.

**2000**

**2003**
Preserve America, the White House initiative for local preservation, is created.

**2016**
The National Park Service celebrates its centennial and 1966 CLGs.

**2020**

**For more information or to learn more about being a CLG, visit go.nps.gov/clg.**

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